

Grittleton House School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Steffi Penny HMI

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

The inspection of registered provision was conducted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006.^{3, 4}

Information about the school

Grittleton House School is an independent co-educational day school for children aged two to 16. The school opened in 1951 and moved to its present site, in Grittleton on the edge of the Cotswolds, in 1967. The school is housed in an extensive Victorian Gothic stately home, with accommodation arranged on four floors, set in grounds of 35 acres of countryside. The school was last inspected in December 2008 and the Early Years Foundation Stage provision in June 2008. There are 223 pupils on roll, including 12 children aged two and three. There are 15 children who are entitled to free education for three- and four-year olds. No pupils have a statement of special educational needs.

The school aims to provide a challenging, stimulating and broad education, developing mind, body and character summed up as 'To strive is to accomplish'.

Evaluation of the school

Grittleton House School provides a good education for its pupils and meets all of its aims. All aspects of the school's work and provision are good, including the arrangements for safeguarding. As a consequence, pupils make good progress in their academic studies and in their social and emotional development. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good as a result of good leadership and management that secure the good outcomes for all children. The school now meets all of the regulations, an improvement since the last inspection.

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good. It meets the needs and interests of individual pupils very effectively. It is supported by policies and planning based on the National Curriculum at an appropriate level and covers all the required areas of learning. It

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

³ Schools which provide childcare for children from birth until the term in which they reach their third birthday must register this provision separately with Ofsted.

⁴ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/21/contents.

enables all pupils to make good progress, including those identified by staff as needing extra support with their learning. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children enjoy a variety of stimulating learning experiences, with a good balance of activities that are directed by adults and those which children choose freely, both indoors and outdoors. From Key Stage 1 onwards, there is a focus on developing the core skills of literacy and numeracy. Pupils benefit from specialist subject teaching and small class sizes. Pupils' personal development is promoted very well through the personal, social health and citizenship programme, which covers important aspects such as sex and relationship education, substance misuse, and understanding the justice system. There are good opportunities for physical education, the arts and humanities.

Older pupils say they enjoy using computers and their teachers make effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) to deliver lessons. However, opportunities for younger children to use ICT for independent learning are not widely developed. The school is aware of this and already plans to extend the availability of ICT throughout the school.

The curriculum effectively supports the development of speaking and listening skills, allowing pupils to become articulate and confident learners capable of voicing their opinions and developing their reasoning skills through many well-planned learning opportunities in lessons. For example, in a Year 6 science lesson, pupils were able to conduct independent investigations and formulate their own accurate conclusions. At Key Stage 4, pupils have a very good choice of options available for them and, where appropriate, pupils have an opportunity to study for IGCSE qualifications. The school is well informed about changes to the 14 to 16 curriculum and holds an option evening to inform parents, carers and pupils about many choices open to them. There is a good programme of extra-curricular activities, including visits to churches, synagogues, theatre, zoos, museums and farms.

Teaching and assessment are good and pupils of all ages make good progress. The quality of teaching is good in most lessons, especially in those which are well paced and where teachers encourage independent reasoning through effective questioning. This was observed, for example, in a Year 7 mathematics lesson. Teachers' high expectations also have a positive impact on the good progress and the high levels of pupil motivation in all year groups. Teachers' knowledge of their subject specialisms and the examination board requirements is excellent. In an outstanding Year 11 history lesson, this knowledge and 'role playing' made learning relevant and memorable. In another Year 11 lesson, the teacher's knowledge meant that what was taught was highly customised, with the teacher supporting learning in Spanish and French in the same class. In the few lessons where there is a reliance on worksheets, the pace tends to be slower and pupils have fewer opportunities to develop their independent thinking and creativity. In these lessons, there are also only limited opportunities for collaborative learning and peer- and self-assessment. Senior leaders monitor learning in lessons very effectively; however, other staff have not had sufficient opportunity to watch other teachers to see outstanding practice, in order to improve their own.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the planning and delivery of activities is based on secure assessments of children's development, and all staff share a good understanding of how individual children can be helped to achieve their next learning step. Elsewhere in the school, teachers' assessment of individual progress is good and the school is reviewing its teacher assessment procedures to raise achievement even further. The school leadership team is committed to the continuous development of progress tracking and recently much has been done to improve the monitoring of pupils' progress over time, in particular in the senior school. The marking of pupils' work is conscientious. Pupils are provided with specific comments for improvement and this is helpful to progress.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and behaviour is good. The modelling of good citizenship by staff enables children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to learn how to share, take turns, and be kind and considerate to each other. The development of family values permeates throughout the school. This sense of 'kinship' provides a sturdy platform for pupils to learn how to challenge negative stereotypes and discrimination. This is demonstrated by the way they care for and support each other. For example, older pupils act as mentors for younger ones to help them with their learning and organisation skills.

Other positions of responsibility are also awarded to pupils who are good role models, such as sub-prefects, prefects, sports captains, heads of house and heads of school. Pupils told inspectors that they appreciated these opportunities to develop leadership skills very much. They also said that having a pupil council was important to them and that they appreciated the construction of the new 'hard-core' pathway to the tennis courts which they had asked for.

Pupils make a good positive contribution to their community in many ways, such as by taking part in team sports. They also raise funds for charities they have chosen to support, for example through a fashion show to raise money for guide dogs for the blind and a sponsored silence for 'hearing dogs'. Spiritual and emotional development is further encouraged and supported by pupils through the curriculum, as seen in the carefully researched works of art they produce.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Pupils' welfare, health and safety are good. The three members of staff responsible for safeguarding and child protection have attended the required training and all staff have regular awareness training. Staff have also received appropriate training in first aid, including paediatric care.

All policies and procedures, including those for behaviour, anti-bullying, fire, first aid and health and safety, are thorough and all comply with requirements. Policies are regularly reviewed to ensure that relevant changes are made to the school procedures. The behaviour policy has clear expectations to promote positive

behaviour and to manage poor behaviour effectively, and these are implemented consistently. Staff treat pupils with care and respect. Rewards and sanctions are relevant and have a positive impact on improving behaviour. Risk assessment is thorough. Fire and other safety arrangements meet requirements, including those for minibuses. Pupils are well supervised in school and on trips, following effectively detailed risk assessments. Pupils learn to develop sensible attitudes and learn how to manage risks, for example through completing 'Bikability' courses.

Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for. They develop a strong commitment to healthy lifestyles through the curriculum and through their participation in sports activities. Pupils said that they would like to have access to a hot meal at lunchtimes; their parents and carers would also like their children to have one.

The school complies fully with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All the checks to confirm the suitability of staff and proprietors are carried out and meet requirements. Evidence of these checks and when they were made are clearly recorded in the school's single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

Classrooms and other teaching areas are pleasant as well as functional, and facilities for pupils who are ill meet requirements. The extensive grounds are extremely well kept and comprise a suitable range of courts and playing fields. The school also makes appropriate arrangements for pupils to use specialist sports facilities such as the local golf course and indoor sports hall. The wooded areas provide potential for forest explorations, outdoor activity sessions and nature trails.

Provision of information

All of the required information is provided, or made available, to parents, carers and others. An attractive prospectus provides essential information and the school's website has greatly improved since the last inspection; this and the regular newsletters from the headmaster have significantly improved communication between the school and pupils' homes. The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were happy with the school and the information they receive. However, a small number of parents and carers would like to have a greater involvement with the work of the school.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The complaints procedure meets all the requirements. It is set out clearly and can be easily followed by parents, carers and others.

Registered provision for children aged from birth to three years

The overall effectiveness of provision is good. Outcomes, teaching, and the curriculum are good, as are leadership and management. Children's individual needs are met well because the staff have a good understanding of their development needs. The planning of activities is based on accurate assessments of children's development and learning. The staff members plan a good balance of activities that children can choose and others that staff direct. Consequently children make good progress in all areas of their learning.

Children eat and drink healthily and develop good hygiene routines. They behave well because they are managed very effectively by the staff, enjoying the imaginative play with adults, stories, songs and rhymes. Good induction processes allow children to settle well into their new school and their parents and carers to support them successfully. Equal opportunities are promoted effectively. Children move safely round other children and have plenty of physical exercise outdoors. There are good resources which enable learning across all six areas of learning, although access to ICT is limited. Risk assessments for premises and all activities are in place.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- increase the opportunities for the youngest children to use ICT
- improve teaching methodology by increasing the focus on collaborative learning including peer assessment and self-assessment
- ensure that all teaching is of the highest quality by giving staff regular opportunities to share the outstanding examples of teaching in the school.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		✓		
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The quality of the registered provision for children aged from birth to three years

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage		✓		

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Primary & Secondary		
Date school opened	1951		
Age range of pupils	2–16 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 130	Girls: 74	Total: 204
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 3	Girls: 4	Total: 7
Number of children aged 0–3 in registered childcare provision	Boys: 6	Girls: 6	Total: 12
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,840 to £10,200		
Annual fees (childcare)	From £23.30 to £38.30 per session		
Address of school	Grittleton, Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN14 6AP		
Telephone number	01249 782434		
Email address	secretary@grittletonhouseschool.org		
Headteacher	Mr N Dawes		
Proprietors	Mr A Shipp, Mr J Shipp, Mr M Shipp, Mrs J Shipp		

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grittleton House School, Chippenham SN14 6AP

I came to your school in March with two other inspectors to see how well you were learning and how well adults help you. We watched you in your lessons and when you were playing, and listened to you talking about your work. Thank you for being so polite and helpful to us when we visited. This letter is to tell you what we found out.

You go to a good school and all aspects of it are good, from 'Tiny Tots' through to Year 11. The curriculum is adapted to suit your interests, needs and appropriate requests. Because of your good behaviour, determination to work hard and good teaching, you are making good progress. You also learn to understand the consequences of your actions and how to think about and care for others.

You work with caring, thoughtful adults who are always looking for ways to make your school an even better place to be.

In order to help the school improve further, we have suggested that staff should take it in turns to watch each other teaching. We think that if they do this, they will be able to see some outstanding practice, for example in the way work is tailored to ensure outstanding learning.

We hope that you continue to enjoy your learning and do your best. If you would like to read the full report, it can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

With our very best wishes for your future.

Steffi Penny
Her Majesty's Inspector